

# **St Mary's Catholic Primary School**

A Catholic Voluntary Academy



How to help your child's reading and  
comprehension skills.

Key Stage Two

At St. Mary's we know that the best way for children to make progress is for teachers and parents to work together. Reading together at home is one of the easiest but most important ways in which you can help your child. As you share books you are helping improve your child's reading skills and also showing them how important and enjoyable reading is.

### **Supporting Reading at Home**

1. Find a place to sit together that suits you both.
2. Try to read for at least 5 to 10 minutes a day and once over the weekend. Encourage it as a pleasurable experience.
3. Find some time to talk about the book as well as reading it. What happened in the story? Does this remind them of anything in their lives or anything they have read before? Did they think the book was funny? Did they spot any interesting words and phrases? Did they enjoy the book?
4. Encourage your child to retell the story you have just shared. This will give you an idea of how much they have understood.
5. Do not condemn the book as 'too easy' or 'too hard'. Children need a range of reading materials. Any 'easy' book helps them to relax with reading. A difficult book can be read to your child. Both are important.
6. If your child gets stuck, you can help them by;
  - Asking a question to remind them of the context, e.g. 'Where did they say they were going?'
  - Re-reading the sentence up to the unknown word to remind them of the context.
  - Telling your child the word to avoid losing momentum.
  - If the word can be read easily by sounding out the letters, encourage them or help them to do this.

### **Pause, Prompt and Praise**

**PAUSE** to help them work out the new words

**PROMPT** by using some of the techniques mentioned

**PRAISE** them for trying whether they are right or wrong

**It is important to use as many clues as possible to help your child when they encounter difficulty.**

### **After Reading**

Talking about the book with your child at the end will help your child in their enjoyment and understanding of the book.

- Did you enjoy that book? Why? Why not?
- Who was your favourite character? Why?
- Which part did you like the best? Why?
- Was there any part you didn't like? Why?
- Would you choose this book/story again?

### **Which books are best?**

1. Books your child likes.
2. Books suggested by your child's teacher
3. Books your child chooses from a library or bookshop that they want to read
4. Never be afraid of re-reading books

### **What else can your child read?**

- Comics
- Magazines
- Travel brochures
- Instructions or recipes
- What's on television tonight
- Information books
- Manuals
- Newspapers
- Poems
- Taped/CD/Recorded stories
- Sports Reports
- Shopping lists.....

### **My child is a good reader. Can I still help?**

YES! Although children will often want to read in their heads when they become fluent readers and you should not insist on too much reading aloud, there are still many things that you can do.

Discuss with them what they have read – about the character, about the plot, about the important parts of the story, about what they have learnt from the information, about their feelings as they read the story...

For example;

- Which part of the story did you like best? Why?
  - What do you think will happen next?
  - Would you like X as a friend? Why?
  - What do you think X should have done when..?
  - How do you think the story will end?
  - Was the information detailed enough?
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- Encourage them to think about the way the book has been written; the print, the layout and the illustrations.
  - Take your child to the library
  - Help your child to choose books
  - Try reading bits of a book together into a tape recorder using different voices!

### **My child won't read, no matter what I do. How can I help?**

- Read to your child as much as possible
- Don't make an issue out of it
- Talk to your child's class teacher
- Working together will help

### **How to encourage your child to read**

**Read yourself!** Show a good example by talking about the reading you do at work and at home. Let your child know that reading is an important part of your life.

**Keep books safe.** Make your child their own special place to keep their books in their bedroom.

**Visit your library** – it's free to join! As well as taking out story books, use visits to the library as a time to find books and CD ROMs about your child's hobbies and interests.

**Make time to read.** Set aside a time for reading for the family – after school or before bedtime. Encourage independent reading but don't be afraid to still tell a bedtime story.

**Don't just read books.** Encourage your child to read newspapers, TV guides, comics and magazines. Ask your child to find out information from the Yellow Pages, the Internet, cookery books, etc.

Let your child read with younger children.

Encourage them to read to other members of the family.

**Keep in touch with school.** Make sure your child swaps their home reading books regularly at school and try to make a regular time slot of about 10 minutes to hear them read.

**If English is not your family's first language:** You can buy dual language books. You can talk about books and stories in any language.

### **How to help with reading**

**Be positive!** Praise your child for trying hard at their reading. Let them know it's all right to make mistakes.

**Give them time.** Let them make a guess before you tell them the word. Let them read to the end of the line before correcting their mistakes. It doesn't matter if you have to tell them the word sometimes.

**Spot words inside words.** Help them to spot words they know within larger more complicated words.

**Let them read their favourites.** Don't worry if they only read one kind of book.

**Make the story come to life.** Encourage your child to read with expression. This will help them read more fluently.

**Ask lots of questions about the story.**

What would you have done if you were.....? Does this book remind you of any thing that has happened to you?

Can you guess what is going to happen next?

Use a dictionary. Buy a simple dictionary and use it to check the meanings of new words.

### **Activities to try at home**

Make a scrap book with your child about their favourite star, group or team. Let them cut pictures out of magazines and papers and write their own captions.

Buy a book of crosswords and wordsearches and try to solve them together. Make up your own puzzles to try out on family and friends.

### **How reading is assessed**

We want our children to love reading, and therefore it is essential that they have a good level of comprehension in order to fully enjoy and engage in a book.

Reading skills are divided into areas which are shown below. These guidelines are used to help children to understand the text beyond simply decoding words.

When listening to your child read, or after they have read on their own, it would be useful if you could ask them some questions about the text using this booklet as a guideline.

## Assessment areas

<b>Decode accurately.</b> Read with understanding
<b>Seek, find and understand the text.</b> Literal responses to text. Text reference.
<b>Inference and deduction</b> (between the lines) Interpret; put yourself in their shoes; text reference.
<b>Structure.</b> Commenting on presentational features. Why is the text presented and organised as it is?
<b>Language.</b> Why did the writer use that word / phrase / image / sentence etc. Literary awareness. Impact on reader.
<b>The Writer</b> Writer's purpose. Writer's attitudes and values.
<b>The Text and the World.</b> How the text fits into its social, historical, cultural, literary heritage and context.

## Question prompts to develop decoding

Do you see a word you know?  
What would make sense/ sound right?  
What would you expect to see at the beginning of .....?  
Is it like a word you already know?  
Can you see a word inside the word?  
Blend this part of the word.  
Does the sentence make sense?

## Question prompts to develop seeking, finding and understanding the texts.

Where and when did the story take place?  
What did s/he/it look like?  
Who was s/he/it? Can you name the....?  
Where did s/he/it live?  
Who are the characters in the book?  
What happened after?  
How many....?  
Describe what happened at....?  
Who spoke to ....? Identify who....?  
Can you tell me why?  
Which is true false.....?

Find the meaning of....?

What is. ... ?

### **Question prompts to develop inference and deduction**

How did \_\_\_ feel?

Why did \_\_\_ feel / think \_\_\_?

Match feelings / thoughts to parts of the story.

How do we know \_\_\_?

What does this tell us about how \_\_\_ is feeling / thinking?

Have you ever had a similar experience?

How did you feel?

Put yourself in their shoes.

Who do you know who is like \_\_\_?

What do you think will happen because of...?

If this was you – how would your friends react?

### **Question prompts to develop structure**

Where could you find out about... in this book?

Where in the book would you find...?

Sub-headings: Are they statements or do they ask questions?

Which sub-headings engage the reader more effectively?

What's the difference between the index and the contents?

If you want to find out about... how could you do it?

What's the best place to look for information about...?

If you can't find information in the contents, where else might you look?

What are the main ideas in this paragraph and how are they related?

How does the layout and presentation of this advert help to persuade you to take notice of its campaign?

Where in this chapter does the writer give another point of view?

How does she signal that she's going to do this?

### **Question prompts to develop language**

Which feature does the author use in a (specified) piece of text? Why?

What does (word/phrase) mean?

Why has the author used this phrase/ feature? E.g. italics, bold, repetition, simile, exclamation marks, headings, bullet points, captions etc.

Comment on the effect.

What has the author used in the text to make this character funny/sad/angry/tense?

How effective is this?

How has the author used the text to make the situation or event angry/tense?

Comment on the effect.

Think of another more/less emotive word you can substitute here. What different effect would your word have? As a reader, how do you feel about...? How has the author created this feeling?

Which words and phrases tell you that the author is describing...?

How could the meaning be changed by altering the punctuation? E.g. commas, full stops, ellipsis, exclamation marks etc.

Comment on the effect.

### **Question prompts to understanding the writer's purpose**

Why did the author choose this setting?

What do you think the writer's purpose is?

How do you know?

What did the writer intend by (phrase / sentence /incident... etc)?

What is the purpose of this particular paragraph/character/change?

Why has the author used humour at this point?

Look at the caption and diagram. What does it explain to you? Why does the writer choose to include them?

What impression do you think the writer wants to give of this character?

Why? What effect does this have on other characters?

In this paragraph, what effect does the author want to have on the reader?

From the opening section of the text, what is the writer's opinion of school/the war/ animals etc?

Which other author handles time in this was e.g. flashbacks; dreams?

Which stories have openings like this?

Which article/letter would most persuade you to change your mind?

Why?

By using these words/phrases (.....) what effect has the author had on the reader?

### **Question prompts to understanding the text in the world**

Can you think of another story which has a similar theme; eg. good over evil; weak over strong; wise over foolish?

Where there is a different cultural setting - where is the story set? What are the features of this setting e.g. language, environment, attitudes?

What difference does the culture make to how the characters act/react in the story?

What does this tell us about the way of life within this different culture?

Which other stories deal with similar issues e.g. social; moral; cultural?

In the fairy stories that you know, who are the heroes/ villains? What have they got in common and how are they different?

What cultural/ historical/ traditional features add to the success of this story/ piece of writing/ poem/ description etc? What evidence do you have to justify your view?

How is this setting similar to settings in other traditional tales you have read?

How would this text work in a different cultural/ historical setting?

**Books that have worked well with reluctant readers**

Age	Title	Author
7-9	Vlad the Drac series	Ann Jungman
7-9	Big Tom	Jean Ure
7-9	War Boy	Michael Foreman
7-9	Indian in the Cupboard	Lynne Reid Banks
8-12	Kensuke's Kingdom	Michael Morpurgo
8-12	Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key	Jack Gantos
8-10	Measle and the Wrathment	Ian Ogilvy
8-10	The Turbulent Term Of Tyke Tyler	Gene Kemp
9-12	Krindlekrax	Philip Ridley
9-12	Lion Boy	Zizou Corder
9-12	I Am David	Anne Holm
9-12	Thief in the Village and other stories	James Berry
9-12	Artemis Fowl	Eoin Colfer
9-12	The Fire Within	Chris d'Lacey
9-12	Ice Fire	Chris d'Lacey
9-12	I Was a Rat	Philip Pullman
9-12	Clockwork	Philip Pullman
9-12	Aladdin and the Enchanted Lamp	Philip Pullman
9-12	The Adventure series – Lion Adventure; Tiger Adventure	Willard Price
9-14	Stormbreaker	Anthony Horowitz
	The Way of Danger	Ian Serrallier
	Friend or Foe	Michael Morpurgo
	The Fib	George Layton

## Useful Websites

Booktrust [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

The Child Literacy Centre [www.childliteracy.com](http://www.childliteracy.com) (US site but has some interesting links)

[www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk](http://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk)